

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* is an originally English novel written by Khaled Hosseini. It was first published on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 by Riverhead Books, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc, New York. It consists of 384 pages and 51 chapters, with ISBN 978-1-59448-950-1 (first edition, hardcover). The title of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* comes from a poem by Saib-e-Tabrizi, a seventeenth-century Persian poet about Kabul, he wrote that poem after a visit to the city left him deeply impressed. Hosseini searched for English translations of poems about Kabul, to be used in a scene where the sadness character caused by leaving his beloved city, when he found this particular verse. He realized that he had found not only the right line for the scene, but also a remaining title in the phrase “*a thousand splendid suns*” which appears in the next-to-last stanza. The poem was translated from Farsi by Dr. Josephine Davis. It refers to a poem in which the city of Kabul was described as having a thousand splendid suns. It also is a symbol for Mariam who “is in Laila's own heart, where she shines with the bursting radiance of a thousand suns” (ATSS, 2007: 246).

Hosseini began his writing by his first novel, *The Kite Runner*, in March of 2001. It was published and has since become an international bestseller in 2003, it was published in 70 countries. His second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was published in May of 2007, in 60 countries (<http://www.khaledhosseini.com/hosseini-bio.html>).

The novel tells about a woman named Mariam, a *harami* child, looking for acceptance by her surroundings in the backdrop of Kabul in the 20th and 21st century. The story in this novel split into four parts that focus on individual stories: Part one is about Mariam, part two is on Laila, part three is on the relationship between the two women, and the last is about Laila's life with Tariq.

The young Mariam lives in Gul Daman, inside a small building called a *kolba*, it is on the outskirts of Herat with her mother. Mariam's father, Jalil, is a wealthy businessman who owns a cinema and lives in the town with three wives and nine children. Mariam is his illegitimate daughter, while nana actually is Jalil's maid. Till one day, Jalil forces Mariam to be married by Rasheed, a shoemaker from Kabul who is thirty years older than her. In her marriage, Mariam is not able to give a child for Rasheed. This makes Rasheed grows more and more despondent over his wife's inability to have a child and particularly a son. As their marriage wears on Rasheed gradually becomes more and more abusive.

Part Two introduces Laila, a smart girl lives in Kabul. She has a close friend named Tariq, a boy living in her neighborhood. They accidentally develop a romantic relationship despite being aware of the social boundaries between men and women in Afghan society. War comes to Afghanistan, and Kabul is bombarded by rocket attacks. Tariq's family decides to leave the city, and the emotional farewell between Laila and Tariq drive them making love. After recovering from her injuries caused the bombs, Laila finds herself

is pregnant, this baby is Tariq's daughter. Being so desperate of losing her family and also Tariq, while her stomach becomes bigger, she decides to accept Rasheed as her husband. When Laila gives birth to a daughter, Aziza, Rasheed is displeased and suspicious. This results in him becoming abusive towards Laila. Mariam and Laila eventually become confidants and best friends.

Like the other novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel also got some positive and also negative responses from the reader. Here are some negative responses from the reader, first came from Nausheina Haniff (<http://www.squidoo.com/Thousand-Splendid-Suns>) said that *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was disappointing, because the author of the book gave the readers (especially non-Islam) a very negative thought about men and women Muslim, so they will probably get a misunderstanding view of Islam after reading the novel. Second response came from Shaan Rizvi (<http://www.islamicinsights.com/entertainment/books/thousand-splendid-suns-book-review.html>) who gave the same comment as Nausheina Haniff.

Those are the examples of negative responses, the here are positive responses, first came from Lev Grossman (at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1622583,00.html>) who praised the novel as “a dense, rich, pressure-packed guide to enduring the unendurable”. Second response came from Harvey Freedenberg (at <http://www.bookreporter.com/reviews/a-thousand-splendid-suns>) said that *A Thousand Splendid Suns* has

challenging subject matter and well-written also, so it deserve to get the praises.

Beside those responses, this novel also received starred reviews from Publishers Weekly, Library Journal, Kirkus Reviews, and Booklist as well as reaching on Amazon.com's bestseller list before its release. One of the best magazines, Time magazine's Lev Grossman, placed it at number three in the Top 10 Fiction Books of 2007. This novel was nominated for ALA's Best Book for Young Readers Award 2008, and Book Sense Picks Highlights 2007. The best of lists of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was featured in numerous end-of-year wrap-ups and best-of lists, such as: Worldwide Bestselling title in 2008, *Washington Post* best books of 2007, *San Francisco Chronicle* Notables of 2007, *Miami Herald*, *People Magazine* Top Ten Books, BN.com Top Ten, *Hudson News* Best Books of the Year, and Booklist Editor's Choice 2007. Columbia Pictures owns the movie rights to the novel, but production has yet to begin; Steven Zaillian is currently writing a screenplay and is also slated to direct, Scott Rudin has signed on as a producer ([http:// www.khaledhosseini.com/ hosseini-bookfacts-text.html](http://www.khaledhosseini.com/hosseini-bookfacts-text.html)).

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel deserves to get such awards since the novel itself has some point of interests, one of the most interested points for the writer is about the character. The characters in the novel which become the major characters (Mariam and Laila), but Mariam makes the writer wants to know her deeply. From the young age, she lives in isolated places suddenly has to move into the city she does not know and living with a

cruel man, it's a pity that he is her husband. Till her forty ages, she has to accept Laila as the third wife of her husband. The writer is interested the way Mariam overcome her destiny, also when she sacrifices her life to save Laila together with Laila's children, and all about Mariam make the writer wants to analyze this woman. So the writer conduct a study about this novel entitled "SUBJECTIVITY OF MARIAM: AN ANALYSIS OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S NOVEL *A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS* (2007)"

## **B. Limitation of the Study**

In this research, the writer limits the problem to make the research easier. The writer focuses this research on subjectivity of Mariam in Khaled Hosseini *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel.

## **C. Problem Statement**

1. What factors contribute to subjectivity?
2. How is subjectivity depicted in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel?, and
3. Why did the author address subjectivity in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel?

#### **D. Objective of the Study**

Dealing with the problem statement above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the factors that contributes to subjectivity,
2. To describe subjectivity in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel, and
3. To reveal the reason why Hosseini addressed subjectivity in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel.

#### **E. Benefit of the Study**

The benefits of this analysis can be explained in two kinds of benefits. The first one is Theoretical Benefit and the second one is Practical Benefit.

##### **1. Theoretical Benefit**

The result of this study is expected to give a new contribution and information to the larger body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies on *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel.

##### **2. Practical Benefit**

The study is expected to enrich knowledge and experience of the writer and other students of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta or another University that have interest with literary study on the novel from Kristeva's Perspective.

## **F. Thesis Organization**

The research paper organization of “Subjectivity Of Mariam: An Analysis Of Khaled Hosseini’s Novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007)” is as follows: Chapter I is introduction; it consists of background of the study, limitation of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, benefits of the study, and thesis organization. Chapter II consists of previous study and underlying theory. Chapter III is about research method that consists of: type of the study, type of data and data source, data collecting method, and data analyzing techniques. Chapter IV is analysis and discussion consist of analysis about factors contributes to subjectivity, then depiction of subjectivity, and the last is discussing the authors. Then the last chapter, chapter V is conclusion.